

Homily for Easter Sunday

You know when it comes to little children, they loving hearing stories, especially fairy tales. Fabulous legends like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Toy Story*, even *Cars*. Sometimes children will ask you to read these stories to them over and over again – I can testify to this with my nephew – it doesn't matter which book. Other times they'll just wear out the DVD watching them over and over again.

Well, as we joyfully celebrate this great Easter Sunday, amid all the glorious jubilation and exaltation that our Savior has truly risen from the dead, there is also a touch of childlikeness running through it all. There is. Did you miss it?

Do you remember a movie out several years back called *Hook*? It was the retelling of the beloved fairy tale, *Peter Pan*. It was just on TV the other day. In the movie Robin Williams played a successful lawyer, who was doing quite well with his law practice, but was just struggling at home with his wife and children. To make a long story short, this lawyer was really an all grown-up – and cynical I might add – Peter Pan living in the real world. But after a series of amazing events, he's brought back to Neverland in order to save his children, who had been captured by his arch-nemesis, Captain Hook. After realizing that suing will not save his children, Mr. Peter realizes that his only option is to again become Peter Pan. But being much older than he used to be and significantly overweight to boot, Peter forgot everything about how to be Pan.

Fortunately though, the Lost Boys of Neverland help him remember who he really is – but first he had to go through a re-learning process – one that embarrassed, challenged, and befuddled him.

So, what does this all have to do with Easter Sunday? Where is this supposed ‘childlikeness’ in our liturgy today? Well, listen again to the Scripture readings we just heard: “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him.” “God granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance.” “When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.” Add to these Jesus’ erratic appearing and disappearing to His disciples, which we will hear about in the days and weeks to come. Is it just me, or does this sound like a bona-fide game of hide-and-go-seek? Children love this game!

Now maybe you think I’ve gone completely off my rocker, suggesting that our risen Lord is playing some sort of game. But, think about it in this way: Jesus tells us that, “unless we become like little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” So, do you know who you are? Have you all too easily forgotten like Mr. Peter that childlike quality within – that you are indeed a Child of God?

When it comes to our Lord Jesus, “it’s all about a process of inviting His followers to deeper faith in the Father through Him. [And so, after His Resurrection] He seems to hide, then appear, then vanish – all so that His followers will keep *seeking* Him. My friends, it’s this ‘seeking’ which is so central to Easter.” It’s not so much about simply finding the risen Lord, as it is continually seeking Him.

Again, think of hide-and-go-seek. The fun of the game is in seeking out the person. Once you found him or her, the game is over. And think about what it’s like to watch a group of little children at an Easter Egg hunt – like the one we had here last Saturday in the “blinding” snow. The children’s joy comes from searching for the eggs. And after they find one, they just want to find another and another and another.

My brothers and sisters, the joy of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, that we celebrate today, centers around our seeking Him out – it’s more about seeking than finding. If we think that we’ve already found Jesus, or at least know where He can be found when we need Him – well, we need to think again. Faith is a life-long process seeking Jesus. And this is what we can learn from the children who just want to watch *Sleeping Beauty* or *Madagascar* one more time, or who want to find one more Easter Egg, or who want to play hide-and-go-seek just a little longer. Jesus invites us to a life-long journey – a life-long game, if you will – of seeking Him. He is present in the Eucharist. He is present in the Scriptures. And He is present in His the Body of His Church. He gives Himself to us, who seek Him out; and those who seek, will surely find. So, 8, 9, 10... here we come, Lord! God bless you and a very blessed Easter to you and your loved ones.